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A Healthy Job Market

04.29.2008 | Culture and Society, Faculty, Students

In spite of an apparent economic downturn, 2008 college graduates are facing what University of Dayton career advisors say is a healthy job market for some fields.

"I'm very surprised, that even for a Midwestern city like Dayton, Ohio, the job market this year seems to be really wonderful. Our experience with local job fairs is that companies are really out there aggressively looking for graduates," according to Avery Allen, interim director of career services for the University of Dayton.

Allen said average salaries for all graduates are up 4 percent over 2007. Some employers are even offering signing bonuses to attract graduates.

"We've heard of huge signing bonuses in health care where there is a huge need for people. We've heard of signing bonuses for teachers and engineers as well because the demand," said Chris Wiley, associate director of career services.

Allen said data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicates significant more hires in some majors compared to last year. Majors with the largest increases over last year include computer science, 8 percent; engineering, 5.7 percent and liberal arts, 9 percent.

Wiley said especially hot fields are information technology, engineering, sales and education, especially intervention specialists and math and science teachers.

Wiley said some students with degrees in a major such as science or math will go back for a certificate and pursue a teaching career.

More than 120 employers participated in the most recent job fair at the University of Dayton and have been very active on campus throughout the year.

Allen said that Ohio companies are eagerly pursuing graduates in computer science and all kinds of engineering, but liberal arts graduates are also being wooed for sales and management positions. Graduates with international experience are especially sought after.

Because UD has a strong engineering school, Allen said those graduates have had a lot of contact with potential employers who attend job fairs, interview students on campus and invite them to interviews at the company.

UD's office of career services doesn't wait until the senior year to begin working with students, Allen said. His office starts meeting one-on-one with first- and second-year students to help them link their academic interests with career paths and job prospects.

Allen attributed much of the hot job market to retiring baby boomers. "A huge number of baby boomers are retiring and that's creating a lot of vacancies."

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